

**PUBLIC WORKS & FACILITIES COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 9, 2014
TIME: 7:00 P.M.
MUNICIPAL BUILDING
ROOM 208
MIDDLETOWN CONNECTICUT**

Members Present: Chair Carl R. Chisem
Councilman David Bauer
Councilman James B. Streeto
Councilman Thomas Serra

Staff Present: William J. Russo, Public Works Director

Absent: Councilwoman Sandra Russo-Driska

Others Present: Dhruv Kekare, Student Representative
Eleanor "Ellie" Kelsey, 241 Higby Road Resident

Chair Chisem opened the Public Works and Facilities Commission Meeting at 7:00 p.m. He requested a motion to approve the minutes dated June 23, 2014. Minutes were seconded and approved unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Eleanor Kelsey, 241 Higby Road resident, stated that there is an approved subdivision in the rear lot behind her residence. She requested that any trees in that area that have dandelions, or any trees with the "white fuzz" should be cut down. The trees are inundated all around the hospital area to the point where leaf blowers are needed for cleaning off the flower beds. She also indicated that ticks are being brought up from the mountain to the Tynan Memorial Park parking area.

There is no fence dividing the park from Eleanor's residence on Higby Road to stop the wild animals from being chased out of their natural habitat. Eleanor requested that gates with signs should be installed in the park area to notify the hikers of the boundaries and certain areas that should be avoided during storms. She feels that the park enforcements need to be made clearer as far as the consequences of hiker's actions. Some of these actions include but are not limited to hiking before sunrise or after dark, picking up pets waste and not having their pets on leashes. Visitors are parking in many undesignated areas around the park, which causes crushed rock to go into an existing abandoned well. There is no signage notifying visitors of the proper parking spots. This results in dirt going into Eleanor's water causing brown toilet water.

She stated that the council minutes from back when the park was purchased, will show that there is supposed to be a cop patrolling the park two times per day as part of the agreement. Councilman Serra specified that this occurred back in 1993. He stated that there were officers that drove around patrolling with bike racks on their police vehicles. The police officers were taken off of the list for patrolling while park rangers took their place as normal employees. In the meantime, the Parks & Recreation Department decided that video cameras should be the only necessity. As far as Councilman Serra is

concerned, park rangers should have been kept on the premise since video cameras were never installed as expected.

Councilman Serra stated that signage is needed. The bottom line is that park rangers are needed to take care of the existing issues. The commission can check out gates, fencing, signage, cement dust and roping for parking. Director Russo can consult with Ms. Harris regarding the issues with the trees consisting of dandelions.

It was suggested by one of the commissioners that the ordinances pertaining to the Public Works & Facilities Commission should be studied so that all commissioners are aware of the Middletown ordinances they have responsibility for.

Councilman Serra stated that the parks are the responsibility of the commission. The issues regarding signage need to be recommended to the council.

CORRESPONDENCE

Director Russo indicated that the Milone & MacBroom proposal for park improvements is the correspondence, which was placed under the New Business item 5b.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Public Works & Facilities CNR Fiscal Year 14-15 – Director Russo stressed that a yearly CNR is something that is necessary for such a large department.

Councilman Serra stated that about \$750,000.00 will be needed to supply Public Works with the necessary supplies, trucks and mowers. He asked Director Russo if he can come up with a separate CNR for the Parks Department and submit it to the Finance Director.

- b. Milone & MacBroom Proposal for Park Improvements – Director Russo stated that Councilman Bauer sent information via email regarding the price for improvements which is \$69,600.00. He advised that when it is recommended to the council, it should go a little higher by about \$3,000-\$4,000 so that additional items can be added.

It was suggested that the proposal should be all inclusive, based on previous conversations regarding the improvements. At the very least, a complete inventory should be in possession including the city properties that have potential now and in the future, for Parks and Recreation purposes.

Councilman Serra mentioned page 4 of the proposal. He had an issue with gathering an analysis due to the lack of boundaries and wetlands. Director Russo mentioned that they are not looking to expand anything that is on the proposal because everything they have showed the firm is existing. They will come back to the commission if the proposal is approved. Everything as far as chemical use to water use will be cut down. It is a plan based on research of what should be done to existing parks such as adding more fields on Long Hill Road. He would like this firm to focus more on sports activity and then in the future another firm will be hired to focus on the open space issues.

A motion for the Milone & MacBroom proposal for park improvements was made. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

- c. Street Naming – Director Russo stated that the historical list was given that every developer gets when requesting a street name. There is a list that consists of 25-30 names for streets.

The commission voted 3-1 to accept the chosen street name to be accepted as a city street name. Commissioner Bauer objected the street naming because it is going to become public property once the city maintains it.

Director Russo stated that the street naming is on the August agenda for the council.

OLD BUSINESS

- a. June 2014 Overtime Report – Director Russo stated that the Public Works overtime is mostly road bond work. The reason the extra day is added on for overtime, is so that the city workers can continue with all of the other daily projects.

Some fee structures need to be looked at during the winter as far as budgeting for improvements. Receiving the proposal from Milone & MacBroom is the start to some of the anticipated improvements. The General Council will have to work with the commission to generate and/or change ordinances for these future improvements.

- b. June 2014 Building Permits – One of the commissioners wanted to know what the final number is for building permit fees and how the fees come to be. Director Russo stated that \$570,000.00 was projected in building permits. A total of \$595,210.00 was collected, which is \$25,210.00 more than the projected amount. The projections for the new fiscal year should not be an issue considering how busy the building department is.

OTHER

- a. June 2014 Monthly Report – Highway Division – The commission reviewed their highway division monthly reports.
- b. June 2014 Weekly Reports – Parks Division – Director Russo stated that Palmer Field is gearing up for the northeast regionals. The field is getting a lot of usage and is in very good shape. The state tournament was a success and a lot of positive comments are coming from residents and visitors in town. There games cost \$1,500.00 which is deposited into a revolving account for Palmer Field. Residents also pay to hang advertisement signs at the field which goes into the same account.

There have been complaints regarding the football P.A. system and that it is hard to hear most of the announcements. Director Russo got a quote of \$9,500.00 to upgrade the system to a new one, which would be the same system that is at Middletown High School. The sign money and game fee money will be used towards the new P.A. system so that the council will not have to approve a new budget line item.

Director Russo listed off some streets that have already been reconstructed or are still being reconstructed. These streets include but are not limited to the paving of Boston Road from George Street to the Middlefield line. Coe Avenue was just paved where John's Catering is. Wilcox Road and Arbutus Street were also recently paved. The city is prepping Norfolk Street near Midstate Tractor. Cooley Avenue will be worked on next, along with Grandview Terrace which leads to Westlake Drive. The city is in line for \$1,800,000.00 of the River CROG money for the Westlake Drive reconstruction.

One of the commissioners asked if any basins are being improved or repaired. Director Russo informed them that it goes hand in hand with the bond work and that they are constantly being worked on and repaired, especially after winter damages.

One of the commissioners asked if the bathrooms at Harbor Park are permanently closed. Director Russo stated that they are open during the day. He has a long list of things to do for the Parks Department. Included on that list is the installation of a grinder pump for the bathrooms so that they can be used. Director Russo asked Guy Russo and Rick DeMaio, our internal plumbing inspector how to go about this installation. The bathrooms can be used for small things but large events such as the fireworks, would make for a disaster. All grinder pumps have to be approved by WPCA and Water/Sewer department.

Director Russo stated that he spoke with Deborah Taylor and Jack DiMauro whom will be negotiating the sale of the streetlights. He stated that we are currently paying \$66,000.00 per month to CL&P and it will go down to \$40,000.00 per month once the lights are purchased. This is \$312,000.00 per year that the city will be saving. No extra money will be needed for the purchase because we are under what was bonded.

Councilman Bauer requested that a correspondence be formally submitted to the council when it is complete to give an overview on how the process will work internally and externally. Director Russo stated that the process will be no different. Instead of calling the outages in to CL&P they will be called in to the contractors hired. There will be a better response time rather than going through CL&P because the contract is written to where they have to respond within 5 days of the call-in.

A motion was made to add the street light purchasing to the next agenda. Motion was seconded and approved unanimously.

As there was no other business, the Public Works and Facilities commission meeting was adjourned at 8:30 P.M.